

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) to (e) As per Rule 17 of the emigration Rules, 1983, an emigrant recruited directly by a foreign employer is required to deposit one way return air fare as security to meet the costs of his repatriation, if required. Such deposit is refundable to the emigrant concerned as and when claimed by the returnee on production of requisite documents. However, with the introduction of the Pravasti Bhartiya Bima Yojana, 2003 (as revised in 2006) such deposit one way air fare has been discontinued with effect from 25.12.2003, since the said Bima Yojana provides for the cost of such repatriation.

All the end of the year 2006, outstanding deposits by the emigrants amounted to Rs. 26.93 crores (approx.). Claims by the emigrants on return is an ongoing process.

Indian doctors in Britain

***55. SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA:** Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that over 10,000 doctors from India who are undergoing training in Britain may be forced to return home after they lost a legal challenge;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the doctors' association had said the judgment was very disappointing; and

(d) the steps being taken by Government to sort out this issue?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) to (d) The British Government has implemented new immigration and employment regulations on 7th March, 2006, under which all non-EU doctors will hereafter require a work permit to work in the UK. However, work permit will be given against specific vacancies for which suitable UK/EU doctors are not available. The new regulations abolished the Permit-Free Training (PFT) category through which most Indian Medical Graduates (IMG) worked in the UK. The new regulations were confirmed by an order of the British High Court on 9th

February, 2007. The Indian High Commission has taken up with the Government of UK the issue of allowing the Indian doctors to apply for the first round of recruitment under the system of current Modernising Medical Careers launched by UK Department of Health. The Department of Health has agreed to consider the request of keeping the first round open for Indian doctors. In the first round, NHS proposes to recruit around 10,000 doctors. Further efforts are on to ensure that IMGs are also allowed to appear unconditionally for the second round of recruitment that is likely to take place in April, 2007.

Indian prisoners in Pakistan

***56. SHRIMATI JAYA BACHCHAN:** Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any reports of inhuman treatment meted out to Indian prisoners in Pakistan;

(b) if so, the details in this regard; and

(c) the steps taken to address this situation?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) Instances of inhuman treatment of Indian prisoners have come to the notice of consular officers of our mission in Islamabad from time to time. Pakistan authorities do not inform the Indian mission of the arrest of Indians and consular access is not given until their sentence is complete. In many cases, it is delayed even beyond that. According to available information, 95 Indians in Pakistani jails are yet to be given consular access. 378 fishermen and 144 civilian prisoners and 74 PoWs are still languishing in Pakistan jails. Indian prisoners released by Pakistan have reported ill-treatment during imprisonment.

(c) Government has consistently taken up the issue of the humane treatment and release of prisoners with Pakistan. During the Home Secretary-level talks on May 30-31, 2006 it was agreed to release all the remaining fishermen by 30 June 2006, exchange lists of civilian prisoners by 15 June 2006 and facilitate consular access by 31 July 2006 for subsequent release. As agreed, on 30 June 2006, India released